

As we debate the budget for the remainder of 2011, we are not just debating appropriations for the federal government. This is a debate that gets at the heart of how we govern and how we help grow our economy and create jobs. On one side are those who believe we need to invest in our workforce and our infrastructure, just as we did with the GI Bill and in our science workforce after the Russians beat us into space with Sputnik. On the other side are those who respond that “investment” is a code word for wasteful spending.

The budget that passed the House, which I opposed, takes the latter position. It indiscriminately cuts \$61 billion, slashing everything from education, innovation, and public safety programs to the safety net that helps those who need it most.

The debate over this year's budget came one week after President Obama proposed his budget for [Fiscal Year 2012](#), which begins October 1. The President proposes real cuts, but unlike the authors of the budget passed last week, he chose to emphasize investing in education and research, which he believes will produce innovation and thus growth and jobs in the future. As we resolve this year's budget and turn to the next fiscal year budget, this sets up further debate on our priorities.

As I previously wrote, we need to address our national budget shortfalls in a responsible manner, and I am always looking for ways to [eliminate government waste and reduce the deficit](#).

What we should not do is recklessly gut programs, like those that support research and development, and help get America working again. That is not the way to compete in the future, especially when the U.S. is in danger of losing more high tech jobs and income to foreign competition.

When the House passed its budget, it did not become law. The Senate must still pass its budget and then both versions must be reconciled. The President has said he will veto the House bill if it gets to his desk. If an agreement cannot be reached, there may be another government shutdown. As the budget process moves forward, I will work to ensure that we invest in, encourage, and support the spirit of American innovation and entrepreneurship that has been the cornerstone of our national prosperity since our founding.

Immigration and Naturalization Workshop Next Week in East Brunswick

On Friday, March 4 at 10:30 a.m., the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will host an information session in East Brunswick for legal immigrants who wish to become American citizens. The workshop is free and open to legal permanent residents and others interested in the naturalization process. Representatives from the Newark Field Office of USCIS will present an overview of the naturalization process, including a description of recent changes to the naturalization test. The 2-hour session will take place at the East Brunswick Public Library, which is located at 2 Jean Walling Civic Center Drive. For more information or to RSVP, please send an email to Newark.communityrelations@dhs.gov. For more information and additional resources about the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, please visit my [website](#) .